

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of )	
Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of )	
The Cable Communications Policy Act )	<b>MB Docket No. 05-311</b>
Of 1984 as Amended by the Cable )	
Television Consumer Protection and )	
Competition Act of 1992 )	

**COMMENTS OF VALLEY VOTERS ORGANIZED TOWARD  
EMPOWERMENT (VALLEY VOTE)**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Dear Chairman Martin:

We are pleased to have this opportunity to offer comments in response to the Federal Communication Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on local cable franchising. Valley VOTE is a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations. It is committed to exploring and implementing programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, including opportunities to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.

Valley VOTE does support consumer choice and competition for the cable television market. Most industries have obtained the benefits of competition but the cable television market is an exception. In far too many cases, there is only one cable provider and customers pay exorbitant rates. In an environment where competition should be the order of the day, a monopolistic arrangement prevails. This is perpetuated by a local franchising process that has served to restrict the entrance of new service providers.

The existing franchise laws have become outdated but the Federal Communications Commission does have the authority to reform a system that is unfair to consumers. The Federal Communications Commission also has the authority to ensure a tight deadline for franchise negotiations.

We believe that competition will ensure better services and new, innovative technologies. Competition will also lower high cable rates, which have risen 56.6% since 1996. Competition in any industry is a powerful force that tends to improve the quality of products and services while reducing prices, compared to a pre-existing monopoly or oligopoly situation.

In conclusion, the current franchising process unfairly affects the citizens of Los Angeles, California and the members of Valley VOTE. This is an opportunity for the Federal Communications Commission to reform our existing franchise laws, and we would like to be on record in support of that change. Thus, we urge the Commission to exercise its authority to remove barriers blocking the entrance of new service providers to the market.

### Valley VOTE

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